THE SPEECH OF SIR WILLIAM YOUNG, BART. ON THE SUBJECT OF THE SLAVE-TRADE.

HARVARD UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

THE SPEECH OF SIR WILLIAM YOUNG, BART.

DELIVERED IN

PARLIAMENT

ON THE

SUBJECT OF THE SLAVE-TRADE,

APRIL 19, 1791.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR JOHN STOCKDALE, PICCADILLY, 1791.

S1 175.27.26

HARVARD UNIVERSITY LIBRARY JUN 24 1942

From the gift of Henry L. Shattuck

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Gentleman whoſe Speech is now publiſhed, hath never been anxious to authenticate his words and ſentiments on any general topics of party conſideration, or of political expediency debated in Parliament. He hath read with indifference the nonſenſe occaſionally imputed to him, and even the perverſion of his opinions as well as language. He hath ever cheerfully ſubmitted to a full ſhare of miſrepreſentation in the reports of the day, in common with more able and more diſtinguiſhed men. But on the Queſtion in Parliament reſpecting the African Slave-Trade, it is moſt important to others as well as to himſelf, that he ſhould not be miſunderſtood. His circumſtances, his connections, and his engagements, may, at a future period, require ſome teſt of an authentic nature, to which himſelf may refer, and on which others may rely. Accordingly the following pages are ſupplied from his own notes, and beſt recollection, of what he ſpoke on the occaſion alluded to.

THE

SPEECH

OF

SIR WILLIAM YOUNG, BART.

On Monday, April the 18th, 1791, in purſuance of the Order of the Day, the Houſe of Commons reſolved itſelf into a Committee, "to conſider further of the African Slave-Trade."

Sir William Dolben took the Chair of the Committee, when Mr. Wilberforce roſe, and after a very able Speech, moved,—"*That the Chairman be directed to move for leave to bring in a Bill to prevent the further importation of African Negroes into the Britiſh Colonies and Plantations.*"

The debate on this queſtion being likely to proceed to great length, was at Eleven o'Clock adjourned to the enſuing day.

On

On Tueſday, April the 19th, The Committee was reſumed, when *Sir William Young* immediately roſe, and addreſſed the chair nearly in ſubſtance as follows.

SIR WILLIAM DOLBEN,

HAVING yeſterday liſtened with due attention, and I may ſay with admiration, to a ſpeech of my Honourable Friend, in which knowledge, and ſubtle argument, and impaſſioned addreſs to the heart, comprized all that could be expected from the moſt learned, the moſt acute, and the moſt eloquent advocate of the cauſe which he had undertaken:—I felt the preſumption of any attempt to counteract the firſt impreſſion which he had made on the minds and paſſions of the Houſe; and I wiſhed to reſerve my oppoſition to the meaſure which he propoſed, to an hour of more cool and temperate diſcuſſion.

I knew that the part, which with others I was to take, would bear time and reflection: I knew that we had the vantage ground of fact and of argument; and I knew that we could not be beaten from it, but by ſome momentary impetuoſity and of ſudden effect; and which, I truſt in the good ſenſe of the Houſe, now prepared to reſiſt *the*

manner

manner of debating this queſtion, there is no reaſon further to apprehend. Sir we have much need to poſſeſs a vantage-ground, whilſt ſo much ability, and ſo much influence of ſituation and of character are ranged on the ſide of our adverſaries. Truth and Reaſon muſt indeed be with us, and ſtrongly with us, to warrant a ſingle hope of ſucceſs in event of this night's debate.—Yet that hope I do venture to entertain, and I humbly requeſt your attention whilſt I ſtate the facts and inferences on which I rely.——

Sir, Thoſe who ſupport the Motion for a direct and immediate abolition of the Britiſh Trade to Africa for Slaves, have never pretended that certain intereſts of private Property and of the public Commerce of theſe Kingdoms may not be affected by ſuch meaſure. The utmoſt which they have attempted to ſhow, in palliation of ſudden or eventual loſs to our Coloniſts, to our Merchants, and to the Manufacturers of this Country, is a proſpect of indemnification from a new Trade, to originate in the further Culture and Civilization of Africa, as a natural reſult of ſuppreſſing the traffic for Slaves. Hopes of this ſort, are ſurely diſtant, if not deluſive; whilſt on their own grounds the loſs of Individuals and of the Nation is great in the firſt inſtance, and in the circulation of Mercantile

cantile Capital may extend further than can be now eſtimated, and ſhake the very receſſes of private and of public Credit, apparently the moſt remote, and moſt ſafe from operation of the Queſtion before us.—But, without availing myſelf of any admiſſion of much to be given up now, for much contended to be gained hereafter; I appeal for the foundation of conſequences which I ſtate, to the Commercial Tables of Shipping, and of Export and Import, contained in the Report of the Privy Council, and in other documents on your table; and from the ſame papers, I infer a hazard of yet further moment, when I advert to the evidence of Men, who, as Governors, or in other Official Capacity, have no other intereſt in the Queſtion, but what is a public intereſt, and which moſt of all ought to influence our deliberations.

The force of ſuch conſiderations hath been admitted indeed no further than as it could not, without affront to the plaineſt underſtanding, be denied; and what was admitted, hath been repelled by conſiderations of yet greater force,—by the paramount claims of Juſtice and of Humanity. However we may differ as to Place, or Time, or Means, for the giving them effect, none will oppoſe ſuch claims, when clear and acknowledged. But ere we acknowledge them, the very principles of Juſtice

demand examination of the Premiſes which we are urged to proceed upon; and the genuine motives of Humanity require diſcrimination of circumſtances, of objects, and of effects. We ſhould be bounden in duty as Individuals ſo far to temper our firſt impulſe to intervention of kind office. But, as Public Men,—as Truſtees for the great and national Intereſts which are involved in the Queſtion before us,—ſurely we ſhould do well to enquire into the real merits of the caſe,—and ſift out the probable attainments on the ſide of Philanthropy and Moral Obligation, to which the ſacrifice propoſed is (in the opinion of many) a conſiderable Portion of Britiſh Commerce, and an ultimate ſurrender of the Britiſh Colonies. When my Vote is ſolicited for an abolition of the Trade in queſtion, as far as relates to Great-Britain only, I would wiſh at leaſt previouſly to be convinced, *that, whilſt Britain loſes, Africa will gain.* I am moſt averſe to a traffic of Men, termed a Slave-Trade, and I happily anticipate its termination at no very diſtant period of years, under a wiſe and temperate Syſtem of Regulation. Hence I am the more anxious in oppoſition to this crude and indolent ſimplification of all State Policy,—this aboliſhing a Trade, by at once voting aboliſhed; inaſmuch as it precludes better and wiſer meaſures, which are already, I ſay already, are in train—and

 which

which nothing can fruſtrate in their ultimate good effect,—but the temerity of the preſent mode of procedure ſuggeſted to us. Should it unhappily this night be recognized, and receive the Sanction of the Commons of Great-Britain, even though not ultimately made the Law of the Land, much miſchief is yet done:—for your Colonies need your good opinion and your good favour, to encourage them in what they are now doing, to prepare the way, and without danger, to the object you have in view,—and ſuppreſs the Trade you are averſe to, by obviating the neceſſities of ſuch Trade.

If in theſe ſuggeſtions I am well founded, and I truſt to prove I am ſo founded,—there is an end of the preſent Queſtion. Nay, ſhould fair reaſonings and deductions from fact even raiſe a doubt as to the probable conſequences in Africa itſelf, and as it regards the Africans, I ſhould hope that the Honourable Gentleman will withdraw the ſcheme of aboliſhing, in the firſt inſtance, the Trade for Slaves, and purſue the Ends of Juſtice and Policy, by meaſures more worthy the deliberations of a Britiſh Parliament; the Characteriſtic of which ſhould be, as it ever has been, to attain not only the beſt Ends, but by the wiſeſt means.

In examining the Premiſes, on which our deciſion this night, is to reſt, I deſire not to be underſtood

underſtood as arguing to other or more general Queſtion than that (in whatever form of words) which is directly or virtually before us,—and which I conſtrue to be,—" Whether the Trade to Africa " for Slaves, under preſent circumſtances, ſhould " be aboliſhed, as far as relates to Great-Britain " and her Colonies, and be ſo aboliſhed by an Act " of the Legiſlature of Great-Britain."

Sir, Great-Britain may abandon her ſhare of this Trade, but cannot aboliſh it. The General Queſtion of Abolition of the Trade for Slaves to Africa is not before us.—We are not an Aſſembly of Delegates from France, from Spain, from Holland, and other powers now engaged in that Commerce, but the Legiſlature of a ſingle Nation, whoſe direliction of the Trade on their own part, cannot any ways ſuppreſs, and (I ſhall prove) will eventually aggravate the miſeries incident to a ſyſtem of Traffic, which every enlightened man muſt acknowledge, and every good man muſt deplore. Sir, I wiſh to ſee that Traffic for ever cloſed, as much as my Hon. Friend, who firſt agitated the buſineſs; but that " conſummation devoutly to be " wiſhed," will be further removed, by a too haſty and unqualified ſeceſſion of Great-Britain from that ſcene of warfare and diſunion of all that is good in ſociety;—where ſhe might better, by pre-

vious regulation of her concerns, inſtead of abruptly flying from them, give example of new Sentiments,—of new Policy; and awaken original principles of Juſtice and of Nature, for Africa, and for the Nations who trade with Africa;—and thus eventually legiſlate for the World, and be indeed the Imperial Benefactreſs of Mankind!

On the other hand, if Great Britain ſuddenly withdraws from this Commerce of Slaves—as Pontius Pilate, ſhe hath waſhed her hands indeed—but is ſhe thence the more innocent of what follows? If her Intervention as above ſtated, would have, or could have prevented what will follow even to the Numbers which form her own preſent ſhare in the Traffic,—Great Britain is not the more innocent.

It becomes me not to aſſume ought, but to ſhew my grounds of apprehenſion, and authenticate the ſcene of aggravated wretchedneſs, which I ſuppoſe to deſolate Africa, as a conſequence of the Meaſure in Queſtion. The premiſes which I have to argue on, are the details of Evidence which heap your table; and I ſhall ſtate ſuch as are incontrovertible in proof that the Nations of Europe, and United States of America,—that all who poſſeſs Colonies on the nether ſide of the Atlantic, and all who

who are connected with them, are crouding to this Trade for Slaves, and wait but its Suppreſſion on the part of Great Britain to ruſh on the Coaſts of Africa in competition for the ſhare of Traffic thus newly opened to them. The Energies of new Projects for old Advantages are ever fierce at the outſet, and overſtrain, and go far beyond the old mark of temperate acquiſition. New incentives to Spoil, and to Rapine, will be held out to the Black-Trader in all the zeal of rivalſhip; and the preſent evils of *comparatively* ſober dealing, be aggravated to an enormity, beyond all eſtimate, in this new Auction,—this new heat of Bidders for Life and Limb. Does my Hon. Friend doubt of this,—does he require the Bidders to be named, and their zeal authenticated?—I refer him to the moſt certain proofs,—I refer him not merely to the Evidence of Individuals, but to public Acts, to exertions and to encouragements gone forth from the Seats of Empire, to new uſurpations of Territory, and to new Edicts for Trade, on the Coaſt of Africa, with the ſole and expreſs view of ſupplying Plantations in America with Negro-labourers.

On the firſt agitation of this buſineſs in the year 1789, my Hon. Friend ſpoke with confidence indeed of other Nations following the example of Juſtice and Philanthropy which was to originate in your

your abandoning your ſhare of this Traffic. Was that prophecy accompliſhed? Sir, it is true, that ſuch prophecy was ſcarcely delivered, when a ſimilar procedure was inſtituted in the National Aſſembly of France; it was inſtituted under every advantage to a propoſition which profeſſed deſtruction not only to a Slave Trade, but to Slavery; it was moved at a time when the Patriots of the day were ſtraining to the very verge of civil Liberty; and in attaining the "Rights of Man," nearly loſt ſight of thoſe of the Citizen. Yet what was the reſult? Sir, the Aſſembly pauſed on a queſtion comprizing ſo many and ſo great intereſts, and ſo many difficulties in application of the beſt principles. The Slave-Trade was refered to a ſelect Committee, and the Report of that Committee calling on the Aſſembly to reject the meaſure of "*abolition*," Mr. Barnave moved ſundry Reſolutions to ſuch effect, and which were received with acclamation, and voted with unanimous aſſent. Two years have now paſſed, and I am aſtoniſhed to hear again, (as I have heard) a repetition of promiſes and expectations thus proved to be deluſive.

Sir, *the French*—that nation which was ſaid to be on the ſtart to outrace us in the ſuppreſſion of the Slave-Trade, is actually foremoſt in the courſe for its continuance and extenſion.

In

In page 37 of the Report of Privy Council, Mr. Dalzell on his own knowledge ſtates the French to be gaining ground in the Traffic of Slaves, in the kingdoms of Whydah, Dahomey and Angola.

In page 48 of the ſame Report, Mr. Penny mentions the French to have driven us from the Trade of Loango, Melimba, and Cabenda, and to have eſtabliſhed themſelves in the Trade for Slaves within thoſe diſtricts during two years paſſed.

In page 49, Mr. Falconbridge ſays the French have, ſince the peace, ſupplaced us in the Trade at Angola, and at Bonny have almoſt as great a Trade as the Engliſh.

In the firſt volume of Evidence taken before the Houſe of Commons, page 171, we find from the teſtimony of Mr. Fountain, that the French have actually uſurped of late a ſpot in Territory, and are building a fort near Anamaboe, thence to puſh their Trade on the Gold Coaſt; and this is corroborated by Governor Miles, page 45, of the ſame volume.

Not ſatisfied with the exertions of their own ſubjects, Captain Frazer informs you, page 57 of the

ſecond

ſecond Volume of Evidence, that late as the year 1789, he had advantageous offers, if he would engage in the African Slave Trade under French colours. Likewiſe Mr. Taylor, of Mancheſter, ſtates requiſitions made to him from ſome of the firſt mercantile houſes in France, for the furniſhing an aſſortment of his manufactures ſuited to the commerce in queſtion.

Further by an Arret of October 26, 1784, a bounty is given of 40 livres per ton on all ſhipping employed in the African Slave Trade, and a bounty of ſixty livres on each Slave imported into Martinique and Guadaloupe, and of 100 livres on each Slave imported into St. Domingo, Cayenne, St. Lucia or Tobago.

Spain too is ſeeking a Slave Trade.—In part 6th of Appendix to the Report of the Privy Council, we have as matter of record, A Contract made in 1786, by the Court of Spain, with Meſſrs. Dawſon and Baker, of Liverpool, by which the latter party is to ſupply 5000 Slaves annually to the Spaniſh Colonies, at 155 dollars per Head, *free of all duty*. We find in the ſame body of Evidence, that not ſatisfied with the Trade reſtricted to this Monopoly, the Spaniards are for themſelves, exerting endeavours to attain an active Share in the Slave

Trade. On the ſecond of March, 1788, Merchants from Cadiz, and Planters from the Havannah and Hiſpaniola, are ſtated in the Report of Privy Council, to be at London, and afterwards at Manchester, enquiring into the Nature of the Slave Trade, and the Aſſortment of Cargo, and of Outfit for the carrying it on.

In the ſame document, we find the Philippine Company actually engaged in the Traffic, and under the Agency of a Mr. Teſtatis, to have already fitted out four Ships, carrying 500 Slaves each.

Laſtly, we find the King of Spain, by an Edict dated at Madrid, 1789, not only encouraging a Slave Trade to his American and other Subjects, by a bounty of four dollars on each Slave imported, but in ſpecial favor of that Commerce breaking through all the reſtrictive policy of Old Spain, (that policy which pervaded all her treaties, and found its way even into the family compact) and opening certain ports of its tranſatlantic Dominions for two years to all foreign veſſels whatever, freighted excluſively with African Slaves.

Denmark too is exerting itſelf to gain a portion of the commerce in queſtion: in page 57 of the ſe-

cond Volume of Evidence, Capt. Frazer ſpeaks on his perſonal knowledge to the Danes already extending their trade on the Windward and Gold Coaſt—and Mr. Baillie, page 191, aſſerts on authority of his immediate correſpondents from Copenhagen, that many Daniſh ſlave-ſhips are waiting the reſult of the queſtion in Great Britain, to ſtart from that port with view to partaking of the commerce eventually opened to them.

America hath ſince her independence on this country explored every channel of commerce, nor hath ſhe omitted that for African Negroes; her veſſels on the coaſts of Guinea have encreaſed from year to year. It appears from the evidence of Mr. James Baillie, page 191, of the body of evidence laſt cited, that in the ſpring of 1790, inſurances were at that time actually making in London, on ſlave ſhips from Boſton, Virginia, and Charles-Town,—yet theſe were not the diſtricts of the United States, particularly engaged in trade to the coaſts of Guinea;—a commerce, even more extenſive, was at the ſame time carried on from Maſſachuſets-Bay and Rhode Iſland.

The *Dutch* ſuperſede all neceſſity of reference to teſtimony of individuals; for proof of the ſpirit and policy of that people, the moſt enlightened in

all mercantile concerns, in the advancing the intereſts of their African Slave Trade, for purpoſe of ſupplying their colonies.—I here appeal to the moſt authentic documents of ſtate, whence to infer further exertions, ſhould the direliction of Great Britain afford an opening to further exertions.

To this effect I ſhall cite an extract from the Reſolutions of the States of Holland and Weſt Frieſland, dated the 11th of May 1788, as tranſcribed in the Appendix, part 6, of the Report of Privy Council. Not to make the quotation of too great length, I will ſuggeſt as introduction, that the Dutch had reſtricted the importation of ſlaves into their American Colonies to Dutch ſhips; that their colonies of Eſſequibo, and Demerary, had thereon been very inſufficiently ſupplied, and had petitioned the States for relief; that ſundry reſolutions had, in conſequence, been adopted, and amongſt others, the following: " Their Noble and " Great Mightineſſes are fully convinced, that the " want of Slaves is fatal to the planters, and that " as the Dutch Trade to the African Coaſt is " greatly inſufficient to ſupply their colonies with " ſlaves, the planters are under the neceſſity of " privately purchaſing them from foreign veſſels, " and that a ſtrict obſervance of the prohibition " would, probably, ere now, have deſolated a

" great part of the plantations; that therefore their " Noble and Great Mightineſſes cannot recommend " this, ſo neceſſary a prohibition againſt the im- " portation of ſlaves in foreign ſhips, without re- " commending at the ſame time, effectual means " for the ſpeedy recovery of the trade of the Ne- " therlands to that flouriſhing ſtate (the Coaſt of " Guinea), which is abſolutely neceſſary in order " ſupply the colonies with ſlaves." This extract is of authority and import concluſive as to the Dutch. I have thus ſhown the parties, and ſhown the ſituation of the parties, whom I have ſtated to be eager for the ſeizure of the ground we may quit in Africa.

The means of taking up this ground cannot be leſs,—nay, they muſt from the very circumſtances of new competition, be more pernicious, to the Africans, than any preſent ſhare of the trade held by Great Britain. Let it not be told me, that the preſent evils are ſuch, as not to bear aggravation. They will bear aggravation. Things are bad enough indeed as they are. Yet I muſt urge doubts as to things being ſo bad as repreſented by ſome per- ſons. My honourable Friend hath heralded the volume of that evidence which he hath adduced in ſupport of his cauſe. I would overleap the ordinary bounds of implicit belief on any controvertible

point

point at iſſue, in compliment to perſons who are thus honoured with his confidence. But I muſt confeſs, that my value of human teſtimony doth not go ſo far as to admit the plea of truth to contradictions in fact, or to inconſiſtences in inference. I cannot bend to the "ipſe dixit" of any, however reſpectable, in oppoſition to the known operation and conſequences of the very cauſes which themſelves ſtate with equal ſtrength of aſſeveration, as the very effects which they afterwards declare. If the premiſes aſſerted are true and eſtabliſhed, and if the concluſion aſſerted is abſurd and repugnant to every principle of fair deduction from thoſe premiſes,—I muſt doubt the repreſentation: or rather I muſt ſuppoſe exceptions to the rule, by exaggeration to be made the rule itſelf. When I read in every document of hiſtory, when I find in a concurrence of oral teſtimony in the firſt Volume of Evidence, page 9, from Governor Barnes; page 52, from Governor Miles; page 74, from Captain Knox; page 145, from Governor Wenves; page 525, from Captain Hall; and from every one that hath ſpoken to the ſubject, that the Coaſts of Africa where the Slave Trade is carried on, are very *populous*;—I cannot admit the practice of breaking up villages, going forth in bodies for plunder, or even private kidnapping to be *general* among the inhabitants, though too frequent inſtances

ſtances indeed of ſuch lawleſs rapine, are in proof, as wretched effects of the Slave Trade, and as inſtances, are admitted by Governor Devaynes, page 52, of the Report of Privy Council. When, again, I read the detail of retaliation in the caſe of *Bimbe-Jack*, page 46 of the ſame book, I cannot ſuppoſe the apprehenſions of like retaliation not to operate, and render the inſtances of ſtealing, or forcibly retaining Africans in ſlavery, by the European Maſters of Ships, to form rather exceptions than rules of conduct, notwithſtanding the aſſertions in evidence of Many, too zealous perhaps for the good end, to be over ſcrupulous about the means of attaining it.

When further I am told that "Crimes are falſely imputed for the purpoſe of procuring Slaves" —I admit the allegation to a certain extent; but when it is further intimated, that ſuch means of providing the trade are general or ſyſtematic, I cannot admit it to ſuch extent.—Not to dwell on the ſubject of crimes of Theft and Murder, which if not puniſhed, ſociety hath no bands of union, no ſyſtem of peace, and is not civil ſociety; let us for a moment conſider thoſe which are ſtated as moſt often falſely imputed, and as ſcarcely partaking of offence.

Witch-

Witchcraft and Adultery have been repreſented in this point of view,—but Governor Wenves, in page 156, and Mr. Fountain, in page 167, and 187, of the firſt volume of Evidence, tell you, that the ſecret of Witchcraft is the ſecret of Poiſoning—a crime ſurely of the deepeſt dye. This Evidence is corroborated by the practice of combining the whole family in the offence, who may be ſuppoſed to be poſſeſſed of that ſecret; and the terror of ſociety, where ſuch ſecret is ſuppoſed to exiſt, is clear and obvious from the Evidence, that in caſe of a perſon being ſold for Witchcraft, it is moſt expreſsly conditioned, that ſuch Slave ſhall never be relanded in the country.

It is not in the nature of things, or of ſocial inſtitution, that a crime, the moſt dreadful to the ſociety at large, ſhould be ſported with, merely as a means of Trade to that ſociety.

Again, in page 40, of the 4th Volume of Evidence, we find the ſuppoſition, and very words,—"that Adultery is made a crime, on purpoſe to "procure Slaves." On this ſubject, I revert to to the jealouſies of women, originating in the very principles of ſociety, nay of nature itſelf, and which invariably and more eſpecially characterize the manners of all nations in the known world, where

where *Polygamy* is the practice, whether on the Banks of the Ganges, the Nile, or the Gambia. When I am informed of the bolts and bars, and the cruel precaution, which incapacitates each guardian of fidelity in the Haram or Zenana, from violating the truſt repoſed, I cannot admit, that in a country where Polygamy is in uſage, that Adultery is made a crime, merely for the purpoſe of procuring Slaves. It is a crime under moſt rigid conſtruction of offence to the tyranny of the ſtronger ſex over the weaker: and offence to tyranny is ever deemed the greateſt of offence. I cannot, under fair deduction, on the reaſonings and experience which are before me, in the many books of Speculation and of Hiſtory as applied to Ethics, admit that a wife is often dreſſed out for proſtitution, in order to procure the huſband a title to ſell the Adulterer. The caſe is an exception to the rule;—if the ſtatement is any ways general, it is inconſiſtent with human feelings, and above all, incompatible with the principles of Polygamy. In page 36, of the Report of Privy Council, Admiral Edwards tells you, that—"he ſaw the heads of "ſix women, who had committed Adultery, cut "off, and expoſed together on a drum." Such ſeverity belongs truly to the ſyſtem of Polygamy.

Thoſe

Thoſe who wiſh to be informed of the extent to which Polygamy is the practice in Africa, may refer to the Evidence before the Privy Council; Mr. Dalzell, and the Rev. Mr. Newton, page 52: to the firſt Volume of Evidence before the Houſe of Commons,—Governor Barnes, pages 6 and 29; Governor Miles, page 50; Governor Wenves, pages 150 and 154; Mr. Fountain, page 201; Captain King, page 447, and to others too numerous to mention.

The general practice of Polygamy hath a reſult, in application to the Slave Trade, which, were I to indulge myſelf in the ſpeculation, would draw me further than might ſuit the time and convenience of debate. In remarking that practice, as co-operating to form, or to ſuſtain a Trade of Slaves; I ſhould ſtate ſuch traffic for numbers, who, outcaſt from the common ſolace of our nature, and the beſt unions of ſociety, cannot be regarded otherwiſe than as inimical to that ſociety, —as one courſe of removing ſuch dangerous ſupernumeraries from the community, to which another courſe, of more deſtructive kind, might be ſubſtitute, if the Sale of People was or could be haſtily done away. Probably ſuch ſubſtitute would be maſſacre: I am warranted in this ſuppoſition, by the Evidence to the numbers of thoſe ſlain at the

Funerals of Great Men, and at the Annual Feaſts of watering the Graves of their Anceſtors,—watering with the blood of Human Victims; and which practice is corroborated by Governor Devaynes, in page 8, of the Report of Privy Council; by Mr. Norris, in the ſame Report; by Governor Miles, in page 42, of the firſt Volume of Evidence taken before the Houſe of Commons; and by Mr. M'Intoſh, Governor Wenves, and Capt. Littleton, and all who have been queſtioned, or ſpoken to the ſubject.

The Rev. Mr. Newton, in page 28, of the Report of Privy Council, and the Rev. Mr. Iſham Baggs, in page 50, of the ſame book, ſtate circumſtances further in proof of the murders, from vindictive cauſes, or other alternative, in default of ſale, to be apprehended, ſhould the Slave Trade be ſuddenly aboliſhed. Captain Littleton, who was eleven years in Africa, and 900 miles up the country, in page 206, of the firſt Volume of Evidence, gives further reaſon to apprehend a ſanguinary reſult of aboliſhing the Slave Trade, when he mentions the occaſional famines in the interior country, from the droughts, and from the horrid devaſtations by locuſts; when the people, from very neceſſity, become cannibals, or ſell their ſupernumeraries,—who aggravate the famine, and muſt otherwiſe ſtarve, or be put to death.

Sir, my Hon. Friend hath ſtated a full third of thoſe ſold to the ſlave-ſhips to be children; and then aſked, as in juſt triumph of argument,—"Have theſe committed crimes?—Have theſe "been the fair objects of captivity in war?"—What are the fair objects of captivity in war, among ſavage nations, and ſuch as may inhabit the interior provinces of Africa, whence moſt of the Slaves are provided;—I know not. But I know that women and children are not unfrequently included in the depredations and maſſacres of ſavage nations engaged in war. The alternative of captivity may be the lot of women and children of the enemy, ſurprized and defeated in the interior parts of Africa. Sir, I hold in my hand a book, ſupplying grounds of fact, which, by analogy of reaſoning, we may preſume for Africa; and we then ſhould regard the ſpirit of avarice which directs the ſale of the woman and child, as ſubſtitute to the phrenzy of revenge, which might doom the infant to agonize on the ſpear, even before the mother's eyes. The book that I allude to, is Umfreville's '*Preſent State of Hudſon's-Bay*,' in which is introduced a narrative of Mr. Hearne, who, in the Year 1771, made an expedition to the Copper-mine River. In courſe of this expedition, he joined a party of Indians, then at war with the Eſquimaux, and who attacked a kind of village,—"certainly *not to procure ſlaves*,"

ſays Mr. Hearne, " *men*, *women*, and *children* ran " out of the huts ſtark-naked; but *they* ſoon fell " a ſacrifice to Indian fury. The ſhrieks and " groans of the expiring were truly horrible; and " it was much encreaſed by the ſight of a young " girl, about 18 years old, whom they killed ſo " nigh to me, that when the firſt ſpear was ſtuck " into her ſhe fell, and twiſted herſelf about my " legs: when I begged her life, the fellows made " no reply, till two had their ſpears through her, " and fixed into the ground. They then looked " me ſternly in the face, and began to upbraid " me, aſking if I wanted an Eſquimaux wife?— " At the ſame time paying no regard to the ſhrieks " of the poor girl, who was then twining about " the ſpears like an eel."——Fear of ſuch like, or other ſanguinary alternatives, is founded, however, on the ſuppoſition of an abolition of the Trade for Slaves;—and ſuch is *not* my apprehenſion. It is the *contrary*. I have ſtated facts in proof, that the nations in Europe are actually making new and extraordinary exertions, even to extend their Trade; therein availing themſelves of what may be direlict by Great-Britain. What I have ſince ſtated, I mean not in excuſe for the Traffic, on moral conſideration: but the Slave Trade hath ſins enough on its head, without having further to anſwer for than belongs to it. It is not my buſineſs, (but as truth

truth requires of me) even to palliate one evil reſulting from this Trade. For my own purpoſe and caſe, I ſhould fully admit and retort in argument all the evidence, nay, all the tales, if tales there are, of domeſtic diſunion, of every the beſt tye of nature and of ſociety, diſſolved under incentives to vicious propenſities, which Europeans may hold out to the Africans, for ſelling one another. I beg to avail myſelf of all that hath been brought forward by the Hon. Gentleman: my opponent's caſe cannot be made too ſtrong for my own juſt purpoſe in argument.

When I curſorily adverted to certain details collaterally affecting the evidence thereon, my direct purpoſe was to ſhew that the actual ſcene of miſery in Africa, horrid and diſtreſsful as it is, is not ſo much ſo, as to be incapable of aggravation.

This is an eſſential part of my caſe. A ſurcharge of wretchedneſs and of depravity, as reſulting from the meaſure propoſed, is what I augur, and what I deprecate.

The conſequence of Abolition of the Slave Trade by Great Britain only, I have altogether inferred on premiſes not to be ſhaken;—on premiſes of fact.

The

The French, the Spaniards, the Danes, the Americans, the Dutch, would uſurp our place and give the Trade new ſpur and force. To what actual extent the Market for Slaves might then be puſhed, and the miſeries and cruelties dependant on the Market,—the vaſt Iſlands and continental Settlements, as yet poorly cultivated and thinly peopled, belonging to the Powers in queſtion, leave us no room to ſurmiſe, and much leſs to exaggerate. A Right Hon. Gentleman of leading ability hath ſaid, on a former debate, in application to this argument,—" is it an excuſe for committing " a robbery on Hounſlow-Heath, to ſay that ano- " ther would commit it, and with the aggravated " circumſtances of murder too, if you did not?" —This is a mere begging of the queſtion. A Trade for Slaves doth not in itſelf or neceſſarily imply robbery or rapine. Not many years paſſed, Great Britain ſold her convicts (indirectly at leaſt) to ſlavery. But for the Trade in itſelf I am no advocate. It reſts on principles repugnant to the temper of my mind. I would that it had never begun;—I wiſh that it may ſoon terminate,—but the means propoſed are not merely inadequate to,—they are precluſive of,—ſuch effect. Having ſhewn that other States will be, and are ready to ſuperſede us, and take every foot of ground we leave for Trade of Slaves in Africa; and even more:—

Where

Where are then the improved manners, and induſtry of the Africans, and where the new culture and manufactures of Africa?

I here at once ſweep from your table, and reject from all conſideration in this debate, the whole maſs of Evidence, or of opinions rather than Evidence, contained in the Report of Privy Council, or in other documents before the Houſe, relative to the promiſed ſubſtitute of Commerce—which was to be derived from the improved Agriculture, Manufactures and Civilization of Africa, and indemnify our Merchants and Ship-Owners for ſuppreſſion of the Traffic in queſtion.—Theſe were aſſumed to ariſe on the ſuppreſſion of the Slave-Trade; but the Slave-Trade cannot be ſuppreſſed by a partial direliction,—and the grounds are loſt on which theſe great reſources were to be ſought out.

A Right Hon. Gentleman * whoſe extraordinary genius and acquirements have been, and will be to the remoteſt times, the ſubjects of delight and of improvement to every ingenuous, and to every intelligent mind,—he, Sir, with a diſcernment immediate as comprehenſive, ſtated on the firſt agitation of this buſineſs—"that in adopting the meaſure propoſed we muſt prepare to pay the price of

* Mr. Burke.

" of our virtue."—I am ready to pay my ſhare of this, or any price; but the object of purchaſe muſt be aſcertained: Is it the happineſs, or is it the wretchedneſs of thouſands? We muſt not be allured from our duty by mere names; if in aſſumed benevolence we eſtimate not the effect,—*it is not benevolence,—it is diſſipation.*

Some high-minded and ambitious ſpirits, who, towering above the ſympathies and feelings of ordinary men, talk of principles in the abſtract, or if they condeſcend to an application of thoſe principles, yet as if all was to bow to their own pride of mind, meaſure out their own materials, their own frame of men and circumſtances to work upon.—Theſe men talk, (for I have heard them talk) a language ſpecious perhaps to ſome, but which I fairly confeſs my incapacity to underſtand. By humanity being the principle as applied to this queſtion, I ſhould ſuppoſe humane treatment, and conſequences of more goodneſs and more happineſs, to be the object. " No," ſay theſe wonderful orators, " a Traffic in human Fleſh is not a moment " to be borne with;—let it be carried on by whom " it will;—let it be aggravated by all the miſeries " incident to a contraband Trade of life and fever " under the Torrid Zone; let the conſequences " of Great Britain ſuppreſſing ſuddenly her ſhare

" of

" of it be what they will;—the national honour, " glory, and character require that ſuppreſſion;— " the conſequences are not at our door."—My anſwer is ſhort: my conſcience tells me that the conſequences are at our door. The prior declaration may ſuit the Stateſman who, dealing with Brother-Stateſmen, is accuſtomed to reſt his all on a plauſible manifeſto of cauſe,—but the Moraliſt, who in the humbler path of life, meditates " on peace and good- " will towards man," will venture to call ſuch Stateſman reſponſible for *conſequences*. For one, I would not too haſtily or crudely, even with regard to the Africans, forego my right to interfere as a Britiſh Senator, in regulating this Trade to alleviation of its preſent evils, and ultimately to attainment of all the advantages which the beſt and moſt ſanguine Friend of Freedom and of Man can promiſe or deviſe. Mean time I would not forego my right to interpoſe—*regulations*, reſpecting objects of ſale in Africa, reſpecting demurrage on its Coaſts, reſpecting the Tranſport to the Weſt Indies, or the Settlement of the Slave on the Plantations. We on our ſide may do much,—but I fear not to aſſert, that the Britiſh Trade to Africa for Slaves will principally be aboliſhed in, and from, the Weſt Indies. Mean time it is competent and proper to us ſo to provide for that event, as to obviate the paroxyſm of calamity and diſtreſs

which a more ſudden and declaratory Act by the Mother-Country would occaſion both in Africa, and in our proper Colonies.

In regard to our Colonies a ſudden abolition of the Trade for African Negroes would yet further defeat its purpoſe of humanity held out to us, and produce the moſt unequivocal oppreſſion and miſery of the Slaves in the Iſlands. The Hon. Gentleman who firſt agitated this buſineſs muſt obſerve, that I ever induſtriouſly ſeek to meet him on his own, and moſt favourite premiſes. Far from crouding philanthropy out of ſight by details of political expediency, I ſtudiouſly bring it to view. Proceeding to that part of the ſubject which comprizes the relative ſituation of thoſe in our Colonies, whether Maſters or Slaves, as dependant on the reſult of this queſtion, I muſt ſolicit more particularly your attention: I muſt beg the Houſe well and warily to conſider the propoſal ſuggeſted of great and ſudden innovation on our colonial and commercial Syſtem, reverting in ſuch their conſideration to principles of policy ordinarily accepted in all times, and in all countries, under good and wiſe Government. Let us obſerve how ſuch ſudden divulſion of intereſts as hath been ſuggeſted, ſhocks every juſt ſenſe of action derived from experience and obſervation, of the cautious and intricate

tricate workings of policy requiſite in the rooting out old habits, in the putting men aſide from ancient practices, and in the ſubverting preſcriptive or legal claims and rights on ſpeculative reaſonings however juſt and true. Let us as men, heſitate to uſe that rigid diſcipline even on the paſſions and prejudices of men, which is ſuited rather to exaſperate than to amend: Let us prefer the directing and the leading our Coloniſts and others in the way we deem right, inſtead of rudely forcing them from the way we deem wrong. Thus we ſhall act on principles of reform ſuited to a free Government; and above all ſuch temperate procedure is moſt indiſpenſable, if Government hath at any time regulated, protected, nay even inſtituted and rewarded the very courſe of adventure to its ſubjects, which it means thereafter to reprobate and ſet aſide. When in ſuch caſe, Charters of Corporate Bodies, and poſitive Laws of the Land under which property hath been engaged and ſecured are to be annulled; it is but fitting to require that the Act ſhould not be marked with violence, but rather be palliated by precautions, and preparatory experiment of tendency to ſhew, that nothing but extreme neceſſity, (if that neceſſity is found to exiſt,) will induce the intervention of a direct Act of Legiſlature in change of its ancient—*its own* ſyſtem. If Deeds are to be cancelled, and Laws repealed, under which all in

our Colonies, and many in Great Britain have embarked their very means of ſubſiſtence,—is it too much to aſk, that ſuch Deeds ſhould be cancelled at leaſt with form and ſolemnity; with ſomething like kindneſs and concern;—protracting all act of power on part of the Mother-Country—till urged by refractory diſpoſition of the Colonies in providing for, the change of meaſures required; not rudely tearing the papers by which their properties are held, and thus adding wantonneſs to inſult, inſult to ruin.—And now I would aſk if a ſingle inſtance, if one ſymptom even of ſuch refractory diſpoſition hath appeared in the Colonies, as warrants the Britiſh Parliament to ſuppoſe, that the ſeveral Legiſlatures will not act, nay are not acting temperately, wiſely and humanely, to attain the object pointed out to them; and making the faireſt experiment in proof of the Hon. Gentleman's aſſertion, that a natural encreaſe of Negroes in the Weſt Indian Iſlands may be effected by an ameliorated ſyſtem of Legiſlation; and that in the reſult, a Trade to Africa for Slaves will be no longer neceſſary.

If you interrupt the colonies in their temperate procedure, by crudely and widely attempting an anticipation of the end they have now in view, they will never attain that end: whatever in the means

ſuggeſted

ſuggeſted by the new Grenada Act, or conſolidated Act of Jamaica or other Colonial Acts, is beneficial, will be for ever loſt, and cut up by the root, if an Abolition of the Slave Trade is by a direct and immediate Act of the Mother Country, at once declared: a coincidence in its views on the part of its Weſt Indian Dependences, cannot in ſuch caſe operate: hard neceſſity muſt induce other conſiderations. Their humane policy will ceaſe to be practical, if not ſupported for a time by that African Trade which may ſupply them with women and young people.

Yet the very temper of their preſent proceedings affords preſumption, that the humane Policy of our Coloniſts will continue to operate, however it may loſe of its efficacy. It will continue to ſoothe the miſeries, though unequal to remove the evils of a decreaſing Population;—and we muſt take ſhame to our own errors and temerity, if we throw impediments in its way, and fruſtrate its purpoſe and preſent promiſe.

Indeed we put our fellow-ſubjects in the Colonies to a ſevere trial: we controvert their character of benevolence, and yet claim their benevolence: we bring diſtreſs on their affairs, and then we expect exertions of experiments and of improvement from the

the ſtate of embarraſſment and of ruin, which we have involved them in.

I ſhall ſhew on teſtimony not to be controverted, that a direct Abolition of the Trade for Slaves muſt tend to diſtreſs—no language hath been omitted which may tend to degrade,—and diſtreſs and degradation muſt tend to alienate thoſe in our Colonies,—that is to ſay, Thoſe who may be found indiſpenſable to the framing any feaſable plan for the benefit of the Slaves; and who muſt be the inſtruments to give it force and effect.—Permit me to ſuggeſt, that ruin, ignominy and diſaffection, afford premiſes but ill ſuited to ſchemes of improvement in agriculture, of amendment in morals, or of co-operation in Reform. I am not ſo ignorant of the Principles of a free Government, or of the Rights of Britiſh Subjects, as now for the firſt time to be taught,—" that Allegiance and Protection are relative terms."

Having aſſumed, diſtreſs and ruin in the Colonies, as the probable reſult of preſent Abolition of the Trade for Slaves,—I will bring forward, I will bring home to view not an imaginary, not a diſtant caſe,—but the moſt fair inference, on facts and ſtatements to be found ſpecially in the Minutes of Evidence before the Houſe; and which will remove every doubt of the effect of preſent Abolition of the Trade to Africa

Africa for Slaves,—to ruin of the Planter, the Merchant, the Mortagee,—and laſt, not leaſt, to miſery of the Slave, of the poor African or Creole Slave now working on the Plantations. Having ſerved no one purpoſe of philanthropy in Africa or in the Weſt Indies,—having aggravated miſery on both ſides the Atlantic.—Such is the reſult to compenſate truly for the immediate loſs of Britiſh Commerce, and eventual deſtruction of the Britiſh Colonies:—is it too much to ſay of Great Britain itſelf? Before I adduce Evidence as to the probable effect, I ſhould adduce Evidence as to the premiſes on which the effect is to operate. Theſe premiſes conſiſt of various matter, but all combined, and neceſſarily to be viewed as one great whole, in application to the queſtion of ſuddenly ſuppreſſing the Trade for Slaves.

The actual ſtate of Negroes in the Colonies, their proportions as to ſex, their proportions as to young and old, and to the ſtages of ſucceſſion in life; their morals, their manners, and much elſe in their uſage, as well as habits, inimical to encreaſe of the ſpecies, afford grounds for aſſerting, that the Negroes neither do or can multiply by natural means, circumſtanced as they are at the preſent hour: adventitious means for a time to come, are neceſſary to ſupply thoſe connections in ſociety, which

which may give fair promiſe of encreaſe at a future period, by the ordinary courſe of births. Such temporary ſupplies co-operating with the preſent attention of our Colonial Legiſlatures to the Inſtruction, and to the more ſecure and more happy ſituation of the Slaves, may, I doubt not, produce ſuch effect. But ſuch future effect is dependant on preſent ſupplies, and for a period to come.

That the Negroes on the Plantations do not at preſent generally encreaſe by births, was a fact admitted in the 10th and 11th of the original reſolutions brought forward by my Hon. Friend. He advanced, indeed, that the annual exceſs of deaths above births, diminiſhed ſucceſſively in each period to the year 1787 in Barbadoes and in Jamaica. In the very able ſpeech of Mr. Bryan Edwards, delivered at a Conference of the Houſe of Aſſembly, and of the Council at Jamaica, the very grounds of the above calculation have been proved to be deluſive: The number of Negroes being at one period taken from the Tax Rolls, and then a compariſon drawn at another period, not from the numbers taken from Tax Rolls, but from the Eſtimate, the mere gueſs of a Governor or others:— in thoſe diſtinct grounds, no relation of caſe, or criterion can be aſſumed.

Mr.

Mr. George Hibbert, in page 396 of the ſecond Volume of Evidence ſtates, on inveſtigation made with care, and apparently accurate, that the decreaſe in Jamaica is of 2 and ½ per cent. that is, of 1 and ½ more than is ſtated in the above reſolutions; and it is remarkable, that Mr. Hibbert ſhews the decreaſe to be greater in the latter, than in a former period of nineteen years. If this circumſtance is attributed to hurricanes and to epidemic diſeaſe; in anſwer, I muſt ſtate my apprehenſions, that hurricanes and epidemic diſeaſe are ſufficiently frequent in the Weſt Indies to warrant their making part of a general eſtimate. But even admitting the poſition advanced in the Reſolutions to its fulleſt extent, it doth not preſume an exceſs of births above deaths on the general average; and it cannot eſcape notice, that the inſtances brought forward in exception, of particular eſtates having a regular encreaſe of Negroes by births affect that general average, and afford an inference of further decreaſe on the remainder,—that is, on the greater total of eſtates. If for inſtance an annual loſs of four is ſaid to fall on the number of twenty; and in a diſtinct five of that twenty we find that one again ſupplied, then the loſs of four bears in fact on the remaining fifteen, and is to be ſo eſtimated.

A ſimilar inference occurs, on conſideration of the diſproportion of ſexes: When particular eſtates are inſtanced as having an equal or greater number of females than males, then the diſproportion of ſexes ſtated in the total, bears heavier on the remainder from the very circumſtance of the caſes in exception mentioned.

One matter of notoriety hath in a great degree eſcaped the attention of the Examinants, either of the Privy Council, or in your Committees, and which hath further effect, in aggravating the diſproportion of ſexes. It is, that the numerous white ſervants, and others ordinarily ſent forth from the Mother Country in the ſtate of apprenticeſhip, carry out no help-mate of their own colour, and certainly find no help-mate of their own colour, and as certainly take to themſelves a help-mate of any colour they can find: in calculating the proportion of ſexes, we ſhould take Overſeers and other Europeans into conſideration,—for they appropriate a conſiderable number of Negro-females; and we may venture to ſay, they appropriate thoſe of but youth and form,—and who might otherwiſe become prolific wives to the Negro-men, and encreaſe the numbers on the plantations.

All theſe circumſtances ſhould be ſuper-added to the anſwers made to the 28th query, tranmitted from

from the Privy Council to the Governors of the ſeveral iſlands: that is—to the diſproportion of two men to one woman in Grenada and St. Kitts, and of four to three women in Jamaica, as affirmed in the teſtimony of Mr. Hibbert, page 364 of the ſecond Volume of Evidence. In the Iſlands of Barbadoes and Antigua, where the anſwers returned leave the equality of ſexes a matter of doubt, the ſame circumſtances will operate to aſcertain a conſiderable diſproportion.

Moreover, a diſproportion of young people to old under preſent circumſtances, obſtructs natural encreaſe, and requires proviſionary means of remedy, which Africa muſt for a time ſupply. In ſupport of the latter inference, it would be tedious even to recapitulate the mere names of Witneſſes, who have ſtated the alteration of ſyſtem within late years; and have told your Committees, that in former times, by no means an equal attention was paid to the breeding of Negroes, as is now: of courſe the gradation of ages from a period back is not as yet duly filled, and a ſtep of life is wanting on moſt Eſtates, leaving a chaſm between childhood and mature man. This obſervation is of particular importance, conſidered as applicable to the neceſſity of a temporary importation of African Slaves; that is, for ſuch number of years as the

ſupply of youthful Labourers ſhall be wanted to fill the place of the aged or others, who drop off in the courſe of nature. The children in much the greater proportion born and reared within theſe twelve years paſſed, have not reached the age and ſtrength for labour on the Plantations in ſucceſſion as that labour is called for: and I deſire it may be remarked, that this juſt ſtatement and inference would have the full weight and effect in argument againſt immediate and unqualified Abolition of the Slave Trade, even were the births equal to the deaths throughout the Iſlands, and the ſexes numbered in due proportion. Beſides theſe natural impediments to Population, which time, and a partial aſſiſtance from a Slave-Trade may during that time remove; the neglect of marriage or permanent connection among the Negroes, their diſſoluteneſs of Morals, the practices of Abortion, and the inattention to Infants, are all evils to be overcome, and which cannot be overcome ſuddenly.

The inference to be drawn from theſe ſtatements is, that the Negroes in our Colonies do, and muſt decreaſe, until the meaſures dictated by Benevolence and Policy ſhall have had time to operate; and that mean while, ſupplies of Slaves from Africa ſhould be allowed in aid of ſuch good and wiſe

reform

reform in the government and regulation of thoſe actually on the Plantations. If the Planters, being without debts, and without engagements, were free to make a ſurrender of half the income of their eſtates, and to let every other conſideration give way to the ſole object of encouraging the procreation and the rearing of Infant-negroes;—if the Planters could direct their own views, and command their own time, in the making an experiment at their own loſs and hazard, of from how ſmall a ſtock, and under how many diſadvantages, mankind may yet encreaſe and multiply:—If no deeds of mortgage, no contracts of conſignment, controuled and directed their ſuperintendance to other conſiderations;—if, in a word, the Planter was not generally the ſlave of the Britiſh Creditor, he might do much for encreaſe of the Slaves he calls his own, and in many inſtances, circumſtanced even as his Slaves are, might attain, in a number of years, the object he has in view, without Importations from Africa.

But whilſt Twenty Millions of debt preſs on the Proprietary of the Weſt-Indies, as eſtimated, page 386, of the 2d Volume of Evidence; whilſt a full third of the property in the iſlands, that is, of 70 Millions, according to the calculation of a Noble Lord, moſt converſant in commercial concerns, is

engaged by mortgage to the Merchants and others in the Mother Country; how can the Planter, ſpeaking generally, remit labour and induſtry on thoſe grounds, where his own is but a reſidue, and where ſo great demands are previouſly to be ſatisfied, and ere he can claim a mere ſubſiſtence for himſelf? Under ſuch circumſtances, the Slave Trade being ſuppreſſed, and his Negroes decreaſing the firſt year, in the ſmalleſt per-centage, that decreaſe muſt become progreſſive, and accelerate from year to year;—for, as his numbers become leſs, his labour becomes more, from time to time falling heavier on the Negroes who remain.

How cruelly the meaſure of ſuppreſſing at once the Trade for Slaves from Africa, might operate in relation to the Slaves actually on the Plantations of the Weſt-Indies, is not readily to be conceived in all its extent of miſery,—or not to be conceived without horror.

I could give colour to theſe fatal conſequences, from the evidence of Mr. Francklyn, page 96; Sir Aſhton Byam, page 116; Mr. Baillie, page 192; Mr. Gregg, page 226; Mr. Douglas, page 292, and Dr. Athill, who, page 304, of the 2nd part of Evidence, ſtates, in addition to the general topics of too much labour, and too few labourers, the

the particular deſtruction to Young Negroes, from the Maſter being in his neceſſities driven to make them work in the fields ere their manhood is mature, and thus ſoon wear them out, and bring on early decrepitude, or death.—As to the general effects of cutting off all ſupplies of new Negroes, they are deſcribed in the Petition from Demarary and Eſſequibo, in terms ſo plain and true,—that he who runs may read.

This document, to be found in part 6, of the Appendix of the Report of the Privy Council, is addreſſed to the States of Holland and Frieſland; it ſays,—"that (in thoſe Colonies) their annual "diminution of Slaves is five per cent: this is "little felt the firſt year; nineteen remaining Ne-"groes hardly perceive that they do the work, "which the preceding year employed twenty: but "the ſecond year, the ſame work falls to eighteen; "and if another year paſſes, without an augment-"ation by purchaſe, ſeventeen muſt do the work "firſt allotted to twenty: this muſt give riſe to "diſcontent, deſertion, or revolt; or if the Negroes "put up patiently with the ſurcharge of labour, "illneſs, and an earlier death, muſt be the con-"ſequence."

I cannot quit the ſubject of too much labour, and too few labourers, without one further reference

to

to the evidence of Mr. Ottley, Chief Juſtice in St. Vincent's. It is but giving juſt and due weight to the teſtimony of that gentleman, when I uſher it in, by declaring the pleaſure I take in ſaying, on my intimate knowledge of him from youth upwards,—that the beſt feelings have ever conſtituted him a common Friend of Mankind, without diſtinction of colour or condition; and that natural and acquired powers of mind have fitted him to execute, as to conceive, what is for the benefit of all around him. This ſhort digreſſion will be excuſed, when I ſtate, that it is made in juſtice to one who anticipated the views of Britiſh Benevolence, and was framing Colonial Acts for the ſecurity, comfort, and happineſs of the Slaves in St. Vincent's, before our firſt regulatory Bill was even opened in this country, or the Slave Trade in any way made a Queſtion in this Houſe. Mr. Ottley hath given you the cleareſt ſtatement of the reſult to the Negroe on the Plantations, derivative from a ſudden ſuppreſſion of the Trade to Africa for Slaves. Page 167, of the laſt Volume of Evidence, he ſays, "That eſtates in the Weſt-Indies, in general, are "deeply mortgaged; that in many inſtances, where "there is ſuch incumbrance and weight of debt, "the greateſt exertion of labour, and worſe ſupply "of food, are the conſequences; that on ſuch "eſtates ſo circumſtanced as to be defective in their

" their natural encreaſe, the Proprietors, who are " obliged to anſwer the preſſing demands of their " Creditors, would (he feared) in many inſtances, " be induced to work their gangs beyond their " ſtrength; and that a ſudden unqualified abolition " of the Trade for Slaves to Africa, would thus " eventually prove oppreſſive to many Slaves in " the Weſt-Indies." Sir, all theſe conſequences of ſurcharge of labour, and of the wretchedneſs of the Slave keeping pace with the ruin of his Owner, are obvious. But do the miſery and miſchief end here, even in regard to the Slave? No, Sir; Merchants of the firſt eminence, men who can ſpeak to the intent of Creditors, (for themſelves are Creditors) tell you, " that, in caſe of the Slave " Trade being aboliſhed, the Merchants, Mort- " gagees, and others, muſt withdraw their indul- " gence hitherto granted to Debtors, and forcloſe." Look to page 397 of the 2nd Volume of Evidence, and generally to the Evidence of Meſſrs. Baillie, Rucker, Hankey, and Hibbert.

The effect of the Creditor preſſing on the Planter, will be fatal to the Slave in a yet further point of view. In page 173, of the laſt or fourth Volume of Evidence, you are told by the Chief Juſtice of St. Vincent's, " That Slaves are liable to ſeizure " for debts, in default of other goods and chattels;

" and that in a ſale of Slaves, under ſuch circum-
" ſtances, there is no proviſion to guard againſt
" the ſeparation of families, excepting in relation
" to the mother and infant child."—Doth not ſuch ſeparation conſtitute a principal ſhare of that very extreme of outrage on the rights and feelings of human creatures, which the Hon. Gentleman ſo ſtrongly deprecates in Africa?——Why inſtitute new cauſes of ſuch ſeparation in the Weſt-Indies?

The Hon. Gentleman, again, deprecates the temporary confinement in a Slave-ſhip;—Why give further occaſion to confinement in a Weſt-Indian Priſon? Where, under a diſtrein for debt of the Maſter, the poor Slave may linger for double, for treble the time of a Middle Paſſage. But even theſe horrors apart,—is it nothing to excite a general ſyſtem of Proceſs and Sales by the Provoſt Marſhal, which muſt at leaſt tear the poor Creole Slave from his old habitation?——Says the Rev. Mr. Davies, in page 188, of the 4th Volume of Evidence,—
" There have been inſtances of Slaves pining away,
" removed from their habitations, and old ſpots of
" ground:"—but the ſeparation too is—from his wife—from his child.

Sir, I have ſaid enough of the conſequences of the Abolition of the Slave Trade, ſo far as it may operate

operate on the ſituation of the Slave in Africa, or of the Slave in the Weſt Indies. I have ſhewn that the cauſe of humanity is no gainer by ſuch precipitate undertaking. None can gain. What loſs may reſult from the meaſure it is not eaſy to eſtimate, taking into conſideration, the many and intricate dependencies on the queſtion,—adverting to Commerce, Navigation and Revenue.

I muſt here, Sir, recall to your mind, that I have adduced a body of Evidence incontrovertibly, ſetting aſide all pretenſions to the finding a ſubſtitute for the Slave Trade, in the improved civilization, manufactures, and culture of Africa: Such were ſtated by my Hon. Friend as the alternatives of a Slave Trade,—the expectancy was held out to us as reſulting from a ſuppreſſion of the Slave Trade,—but Great Britain hath no power to ſuppreſs that Trade: She may quit her ſhare of it indeed,—but I have ſhewn that ſuch ſhare ſo abandoned, will be quickly ſeized by others, and the Slave Trade be carried on with new exertions and rivalſhip on every part of the Coaſts of Africa.

The African Trade, which we are called upon to ſurrender at once and without preparation, and with no indemnification of Commerce whatever, is, in its connections at leaſt, a matter of the greateſt concern.

As to the traffic for Slaves in itſelf, and reſting on its own grounds, whether conſidered as a trade of export, or as a carrying-trade, or as part of our navigation, I declare moſt explicitly that I cannot be its advocate, on any one queſtion even of national expediency: But as a reſource, I hope and truſt a temporary reſource, to our Weſt Indian Colonies, it derives from its connection with them an importance touching the very exiſtence of the Britiſh Empire. Should the motion of this night be adopted, I preſume not to meaſure the extent of ruin in the iſlands, and decay in their commerce, as dependant for a time on that with Africa. How little in ſuch caſe the Weſt Indian commerce might become, I dread to think of! how great that commerce actually is, I will ſhew briefly and in part only. To follow it through all its various channels and to the extent of its courſe, would require more time, even in the mere ſtatement of articles and items, than this debate would admit of. In the year 1787 the Exports from Great Britain to the Britiſh Weſt Indian Iſlands are ſtated in the Report of Privy Council as follows:

	£.
Britiſh Manufactures in Value — —	1,441,948
Eaſt Indian Goods — — —	23,570
Foreign Goods — — — —	174,084
£.	1,638,702

There

There were employed in the above Export Trade 527 ſhips, of which the aggregate Tonnage was 124,454 Tons.

In the ſame year 1787, the Imports from the Britiſh Weſt Indies were taken at a *very low* valuation — — — £. 3,749,447

The exciſe and cuſtoms paid on which were 1,614,689.

Theſe Imports were freighted in 573 ſhips, of which the aggregate Tonnage amounted to 131,934 Tons, which is conſiderably above one eighth of the whole commercial Tonnage of theſe kingdoms eſtimated in 1789 at 1,054,000 Tons.

In ſtating mere articles of Import and Export, and the ſhipping employed, I know well that many direct as well as collateral branches of national and mercantile advantage are omitted in the eſtimate.

Moreover I purſue not the Trade, even thus narrowed to particular articles, beyond an immediate intercourſe between the Colonies and this Iſland:—I purſue it not to Africa,—nor to America,—nor to Ireland,—nor above all to the Fiſheries of Newfoundland,—or to the Fiſheries on your own Coaſts. Indeed the capital engaged in this great Trade, circulates through every vein; every the minuteſt duct of the political and commercial frame

of

of theſe countries: It is connected with and invigorates every other part of the ſyſtem, and if withdrawn, there would ſucceed a ſtagnation, an univerſal torpor, a death to every energy which now makes our ſtate flouriſh in wealth and in power.

This is what you are requeſted to endanger at leaſt, by a vote for immediate Abolition of the African Slave Trade;—a vote which cannot have even the effect ſet up againſt ſo many actual miſchiefs, and ſo many apparent hazards;—a vote which muſt heap new calamity on the heads of the Slaves in Africa, and of the Slaves on the Plantations, whom alone it profeſſes to ſerve.

I hope I ſhall not be told that it profeſſes to ſerve the Planter himſelf. Certain Examinants in your Committees, indeed, have queſtioned to ſomething like ſuch effect, and talked of ruin to the Planters from the purchaſe of Negroes, as a kind of rule.

Sir, the Planters have generally ſtated their alarm from every quarter, and have come with their Petitions and Counſel to your Bar deprecating the Abolition of the Slave Trade. They might, I think, have been ſpared the irony, the inſult, of its being intimated to them, "that ſuch Abolition

" was meant kindly to them, and for their parti-
" cular advantage."

The effect of cutting off all means of ſupplies of freſh Negroes to the Colonies, would certainly be enhancing the value of thoſe actually on the Plantations, and thus on the few eſtates mentioned as being ſo circumſtanced in point of proportions of ſex, as to encreaſe naturally and by births, would operate partially as an advantage to particular Planters. But the generality of the Planters would be more or leſs affected in a different way.

Thoſe unembarraſſed by mortgages or contracts of conſignments might foregoe the culture of much of their eſtates, and as their numbers of Negroes decreaſed in the firſt inſtance, they might apportion the extent of cultivation to the eaſe and health of the remainder, and thus in a length of years poſſibly ſurmount the obſtacles to population, and leave to their children, eſtates repleniſhed with people, on the temporary ſacrifice of their own income and comforts: this truly would be a glorious ſacrifice. —But I have already ſtated how few there are in a condition to make ſuch a ſacrifice!

Moſt of the Planters are much indebted. The alarm which the meaſure would ſpread among the creditors,

creditors in Great Britain would operate to recal their monies, or certainly to require more than ordinary punctuality in diſcharge of the intereſts of their debts. The latter demand muſt at any rate be a conſequence of their property reſting in general opinion on a mere experiment and ſpeculation. But it is not too much to aſſume, that many may not permit the loan of their fortunes to reſt on a ſecurity under circumſtances of probable or poſſible deterioration, which, once incurred, can never be retrieved. If the capital of debt is not at once demanded, yet conditions of payment by inſtallments muſt in ſuch caſe be rigorouſly exacted. Hence the Planter, preſſed for certain payments, under all the uncertainties of ſeaſon, and under all the caſualties to which his eſtate is liable, muſt on every dearth or diſeaſe ſpreading around him, require extraordinary labour on his plantation, and which labour muſt from year to year incapacitate his Slaves for any labour at all:—his people muſt be overworked, muſt be rendered miſerable, and himſelf be finally ruined and wretched. This ſtatement applies to eſtates in full cultivation;—in caſes where eſtates are not in full cultivation, or not ſupplied already with Negro labourers equal in number to work the plantation to its full extent, then ſo much of the plantation as there are not people to work, is loſt, or, in other words, ſo much

much is, by the Act declaratory of ſuppreſſion of the Slave Trade, taken from the Proprietors.—If the perſon ſo became a Proprietor either by his money paid, or by the ſweat of his brow fertilizing the land granted in original colonization,—he hath no petition,—no prayer,—he hath a claim *of right* for indemnification, on the Mother-Country; which firſt encouraged his enterprize, and which having given him a title, or perhaps even made conditions of his procedure, is bounden to pay the price of the adventure, in terminating its progreſs, and in fruſtrating its promiſe of advantage.

I have ſpoken to diſtreſs and ruin in the Colonies, as operating gradually: but may not the effect of the meaſure propoſed be more ſudden,—a paroxyſm, a convulſion of wretchedneſs and deſperation? I will not prophecy details of inſurrection and of revolt. We all know that ſuch conſequences are within the eſtimate of diſaffection reſulting from oppreſſion, whether of the Slave over-worked by the Britiſh Planter, or of the Britiſh Planter, deprived by arbitrary and contemptuous authority at once of his fortunes and of his honour. It ſeems to have been contended, almoſt with equal earneſtneſs and zeal, to place the ſlaves in their due rank of men, and to diſpoſſeſs their maſters of the very characters of men. Perhaps an experiment in actual

proof of the latter propoſition, may not be an experiment either very profitable, or very ſafe.

Having treſpaſſed ſo much on your time, I ſhould forego all animadverſion on topics apparently irrelevant to the queſtion before you; yet there is one ſubject, which I feel myſelf eſpecially called upon to mention, if not to diſcuſs. Sir, it is with pain that I for a moment advert to the very extenſive Volume of Evidence relating to the Weſt Indian Planters: I ſhall merely touch upon its general turn and matter, in juſtice to thoſe whom it tends, I truſt harmleſsly as invidiouſly tends, to vilify and degrade. Indeed the Coloniſts have, in the courſe of this buſineſs, been no ways ſpared; their Fortunes, their Characters, have been equally and cruelly ſported with. A haſty admiſſion of all ſorts of tales from all ſorts of men;—an over curious inveſtigation of facts, too atrocious and too ſingular to ſerve as leſſons for reform, tho' well calculated as topics for reproach;—and a reſponſive zeal in the witneſſes, ſo very intemperate as occaſionally to diſregard even conſiſtency in allegations,—characterize many parts of the Evidence relating to Negroes in the Iſlands. Some of the Perſons who have been brought forward to ſpeak of the Conduct of Maſters towards their Slaves, begin with ſtrong aſſertions of general cruelty and ill-treatment; then, the Examinant aſks, "Can you mention

tion

tion any Inſtance?" Yes, ſays the ready Witneſs, "I can mention an inſtance."—He then tells his dreadful ſtory, and that ſtory, with all its exaggerations, perhaps ſtated too on mere hearſay, is confounded with the prior general aſſertion:—if ſuch procedure hath the inference in view, which it *ſeems* to have;—it conſtitutes (on proper logical Analyſis) a mere calumny, aggravated by fallacy and diſingenuouſneſs in ſo arranging the terms of the Propoſition, as to inſinuate a generality from an inſtance; a rule of conduct from an exception.

Such critical inveſtigation is not however always requiſite, in order to ground the cenſure which I preſume to paſs on parts of the Evidence. When I am told of the combined *precautions*, and *cruelties* of puniſhment inflicted on Women in an advanced ſtate of Pregnancy;—the Tale is a Calumny on the face of it,—contradictory in itſelf, and repugnant to human nature, and to every principle of human Actions. An Hiſtorian who valued his Credit with the World, would have been cautious of introducing ſuch a tale on any authority whatever, even into the Memoirs of a Buccaneer of Cromwell's time.—Yet this tale is more than once introduced into what is termed, Evidence of the Conduct of Britiſh Planters, of Britiſh Gen-

tlemen, and their Britiſh Servants, in the liberal, the enlightened æra of 1791!

I will not condeſcend further to combat particular caſes and inſtances. The ſelf-contradictions and inconſiſtences of ſome of the Witneſſes are ſuch, as out-do all the views of a croſs-examination, and betray the Parties moſt completely into the hands of thoſe who may think them of conſequence enough to engage their attention: but I muſt advert, although I cannot advert without regret indeed to that part of the Evidence where the *Queſtions* are directed to an invidious compariſon, looking to a degradation of the humanity of a Britiſh Planter, below that of a Frenchman, of a Spaniard, of an American, or of a Dutchman, in ſimilar relations of Maſter to the Slave. One of our beſt Comic Writers diſcriminated better the pretenſions of our people, when wiſhing to ſhew Benevolence in its genuine and faireſt colours, he perſonified it in the Character and Conduct of "*The Weſt-Indian.*"

In thus reprobating the matter and the manner too of much that hath been ſaid in allegation before your Committees, I by no means aſſert, that many good and intelligent men have not given juſt and candid accounts of the treatment and condition of Slaves.

Of

Of all ſuch Evidence I ſhould avail myſelf whenever a regulatory ſyſtem is introduced; for I would wiſh ſuch ſyſtem purſued in the Weſt Indies, till not one Slave is left dependant on the relative character of the Maſter, but be at leaſt as ſecure, I would ſay more ſecure, than an Apprentice in this Country. The colonial Legiſlatures have already gone far in ſuch ſyſtem reſpecting their own immediate province. In Africa, and on the Seas, our part in the buſineſs is ſcarcely begun.

In the mean time, it is requiſite that the intentions of the Britiſh Parliament ſhould not be miſunderſtood. It is neceſſary that the alarms which have ariſen, in conſequence of an immediate ſuppreſſion of the Slave-Trade being in agitation, ſhould be quieted, and that great queſtion cloſed. This the credits and connections of the moneyed and landed intereſt in the Weſt-Indies require; as likewiſe the temper of the Negroes, and general peace of the Colonies.

Moreover the ſyſtem of regulation, and gradual and proper attainment of the great ends of juſtice and policy in view, require that our attention ſhould not be drawn away—to a meaſure idly and vainly profeſſing to anticipate, and render unneceſſary the objects of that attention.

Under

Under theſe impreſſions, I heard with ſatisfaction, that the Motion was ſuch as to put us at iſſue on the Queſtion,—"That there ſhould be an imme-"diate and unqualified ſuppreſſion of the Slave-"Trade, on the part of Great-Britain and her "Colonies." That Queſtion has my decided negative.

Sir, before I ſet down, I muſt appeal to the powerful and able advocates for my Hon. Friend's Motion, and who may aſſume a ſhare in this night's debate,—for temperate and fair conſtruction of the part which myſelf and others may take with me, on the preſent occaſion. I will not repeat haſty expreſſions, thrown out at the cloſe of yeſterday's debate;—but if reſumed, I would ſuggeſt to thoſe who may reſume ſuch language,—that not un-unaccuſtomed to ſpeculation on the human mind, and on human actions, I muſt augur ill to the ſucceſs of a cauſe, the principle of which being '*good-will towards man*,' is ſuſtained by advocates, who treat the opinions and conduct of thoſe in oppoſition to them,—neither with moderation, as men;—nor with charity, as Chriſtians.

Sir, I return my thanks to the Committee, for their patience and attention to that, which I have thought it indiſpenſible in me, circumſtanced and

connected as I am, to offer to their consideration. I shall sit down in full confidence, that the event of this night will show, that the good sense and true benevolence of a British House of Commons are not to be fascinated by eloquence, or drawn aside by any influence, when the road to the true interests and welfare of their country and of mankind is before them, and clear, and direct:——*It leads to a rejection of the present Motion.*

FINIS.

N. B. The Committee divided on the Motion of Mr. Wilberforce, about three o'clock of the Wednesday morning, April 20th.

Ayes, to the right,	—	88
Noes, to the left,	—	163
Majority against Mr. Wilberforce's Motion		75